

among the members. Hence if these meetings could effect a spiritual cleansing nothing could be more valuable for our work.

A large mat shed was erected upon the campus of the Methodist University capable of seating some 1,400 people. There were delegations of missionaries native helpers and others from various cities nearby. From the first the meetings were well attended, in the mornings the tent being about four-fifths filled, in the afternoon crowded, and entrance was by tickets carefully examined. There were two services daily from ten till noon or after, and three till five or six. Mr. Goforth began by telling quite simply of his experience in Manchuria and elsewhere and what he had seen in Korea. Before and after preaching opportunity was given for prayer and many led, but with more or less of a stereotyped and formal tone. Then the services dealt with such subjects as the hindrance sin always is to the presence and power of God's Spirit, the need for revival and other practical themes, all treated in a very quiet and strikingly simple unsensational manner. Gradually men began to make confessions but chiefly of a general nature or of sins that cost little in the telling. One young man from Tsing-kiang-pu rushed up to the platform and with much emotion confessed to inconsistency and deadness. Occasionally others did the same. But we who had been hoping for such scenes as had taken place elsewhere were far from satisfied, and more or less sceptical. Some of us had been in an attitude of mind which hoped for such a revelation of power but scarcely dared expect it, and calmly though with intensest interest watched the progress. At the daily prayer meeting held by the foreigners after the afternoon service one could study the register of faith and hope. Thursday, the sixth day the missionaries were in anguish. I never understood so well what it meant to "agonize in prayer." They blamed themselves for the apparent failure, they simply pleaded with God. They confessed to their own lack of faith and love and effort. In groups or singly they, and doubtless many Chinese too, continue the intercession.

Friday morning the answer came. Before Mr. Goforth had preached it began—where so much else does that is good—among the women who were all on one side. It seemed that the whole of their side of the tent was weeping. Amid the general sobbing one and another, often several together, arose and prayed or confessed to sin. That afternoon it spread among the men with very much the same effect. Saturday morning was probably the most remarkable experience of all. As soon as the hour came one after another from the already crowded tent prayed or confessed, many rising at their seats, with an increasing tendency to go to the platform and make a statement, then leading in prayer or asking some one to pray for them. Mr. Goforth was not allowed to preach. This lasted for three solid hours. It continued all afternoon, and again there was no preaching. The platform would often be full of penitents waiting their turn. By Sunday morning and afternoon it had become much easier to do this, almost "the thing to do," and some confessed

with no other apparent reason. But all through this last day there were many who were evidently doing so because of an irresistible influence.

Saturday several missionaries confessed to sins of temper, lack of faith, unloving treatment of the Chinese and other faults the statement, of which before such an audience was no easy ordeal. Sunday morning and afternoon Mr. Goforth stopped the confessions long enough to preach short and appropriate words of warning and encouragement. But when he had finished in the afternoon the confessions continued long after dark and on until nine o'clock, a large part of the great audience waiting until the end.

Earlier in the afternoon he had asked the whole audience to rise and pray for the Emperor and his father, the expelled or faithless native helpers and members, the whole "Eighteen Provinces" of China proper, and Mr. Goforth's next appointment in Peking, the capital.

One rarely hears such a volume of prayer nor with such evident earnestness (the Chinese almost always play audibly), and it simply thrilled us. Then all united in singing the simple hymn for children and beginning "Jesus loves me this I know."

There was no suggestion from the platform that at this time such confessions should be made. Still less was there any sensational method of any kind. Some were undoubtedly playing to the foreigners of the audience and were wholly or in part hypocritical. Some were perhaps vaguely suspicious that this was expected of them. More were doubtless acting under emotion or contagious enthusiasm. Some of the confessions were of the kind that appeared to cover the greater by telling the lesser sins. Others were mere platitudes or generalities that no one minds admitting. But making amplest allowance for all these there was a residuum that to us cannot be explained in other way than a mighty divine influence. One elderly native pastor whose knowledge of Chinese human nature has tended to make him pessimistic and whose pastoral experience has been most dispiriting came to the meetings with little sympathy and no expectations. He says that at the very least there were one-fourth of the confessions which were absolutely above suspicion and to be accounted for in no other way. A heathen Confucianist who attended regularly and is now convinced that Christianity is true, says fully half of those whom he knew—and he knew nearly all the local people—were unquestionably sincere, and the tone of all was about in this proportion. He added that what officials could by no torture have extracted these Christians admitted in public. These two testimonies are the most conservative and unprejudiced we have heard. Of those who confessed from the platform there were about 300, while those in the audience could not have been reckoned. To those who know the Chinese and their emphasis on "face" this meeting is all the more phenomenal.

It would be impossible to recount the nature of the confessions. Some had broken every commandment in the Decalogue, especially as to murderous or hateful thoughts and actual transgres-

sion of the remaining four commandments, including even two women who had violated the seventh. In some cases the admissions were made with intense agony, in others there had been a deliberate intention carried out with perfect self-control. The young man from Tsing-kiang-pu confessed four or five times before he could finally tell the real thing that haunted him, that he belonged to a secret gang of salt-smugglers the badge of which he tore from him and threw upon the pulpit with tears streaming down his face. Nor was his experience in not at first making a clean-breast unique. Helpers confessed having managed law-suits in the Church's name, to idolence, love of money, bitterness against their foreign associates, etc. Some told of money belonging to others which they promised to return. Many called on members of the audience by name to forgive a wrong, and many reconciliations were thus effected. One heathen teacher admitted that he had been fighting the question for thirty years, that he had hated the foreigners and tried to find every fault he could in them and their converts, but he now had determined despite the ridicule it would bring upon him to apply for baptism. The students of the University had been at odds and had brought reproach upon their Y. M. C. A. and the Christian name. Those in charge had been hoping the meetings would heal the breach. At first they treated the thing with scorn. Thursday night in their own Y. M. C. A. service they confessed to the pride and other causes that had led to estrangement, and on Sunday one after another made the most manly statements I ever heard from young men, admitting not only this but other things that had been inconsistent and a cause of stumbling to the heathen school-mates. Our Seminary students confessed—some in public, and but two or three in a remarkable meeting among themselves that lasted for two hours—the things they confessed we, of the faculty, having not pried into, but we can testify to a new ring and earnestness and in some cases at least to a happy expression "joy in the Holy Ghost." One of them had before entering the seminary bought two outer garments with money to which he had no right. These he wore one day and after confessing the story from the platform he disrobed himself of them and threw them upon a chair as he walked down. Another told of a questionable speculation which involved a number of helpers and Christians in the Kiangyin district, and he together with one of the helpers present relinquished their investments amounting in each case to over four months' stipend.

Other people confessed to sins of omission and put themselves on record to begin a new life of service and love. Many seemed oppressed with their past indifference regarding the salvation of relatives and friends and—most wonderful of all for a Chinaman—of wives. Men even publicly apologize to their wives, which one must live in China to appreciate.

Imagination and memory seem to conspire against some people by swapping functions at critical junctures.—J. A. Macdon.